Russian Security and Nuclear Policies: Successor to the Superpower Arsenal?, in International Studies Compendium, ed. Robert A. Denemark. Wiley-Backwell

Chapter · January 2011

DOI: 10.13140/2.1.1255.9681

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<eh>Russian Security and Nuclear Policies: Successor to the Superpower Arsenal?
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<ha>Introduction
<p>At the height of the Cold War, the competitive assessment of the Soviet threat and geopolitical strategies aimed at reducing the US–Soviet tensions, especially around their nuclear arsenals, were bitterly disputed questions. A popular narrative of the Soviet nuclear power preparing for a decisive first strike on the United States required a massive military build-up and reinforcement of the American nuclear posture. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Soviet juggernaut was gone. The prevailing attitude characterizing the security situation in international relations was that the Cold War was over and the West had won. The Soviet military machine was fractured into pieces, and the new Russian army inherited only the debris of a once powerful military arsenal.

Notwithstanding the doomsday of its superpower status, the new Russia has never surrendered its great-power claims. On the contrary, over time its pretentions to global role and great-power standing have only strengthened. The accession of Russia to the lion's share of the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons has become Russia's impetus for reclaiming its global stature. There is, however, an ongoing debate as to whether the Russian ability to produce, deploy, and modernize a sizable nuclear arsenal is a sufficient basis for Russia's great-power standing. For some, the contemporary security posture of the Russian Federation is a distorted image of the military stature from the Soviet time (Cimbala 2001a:189; Barany 2007:1). The Russian military has not been able to fully recover the unprecedented decay caused by the disintegration of the Soviet military and the turbulent economic transition. Russia's military-industrial complex has significantly deteriorated, and Russia has fallen behind the United States and Europe in the area of information technologies and other strategically important sectors of national economy.

For others, the image of Russia's political irrelevancy and demotion of the country to a status of a "small" or even "medium" power is mistaken. Although, Russia's economy suffered during the postcommunist transition and the Russian army experienced a drastic decline in the quality of troops, discipline, and morale, this is not a new state of affairs for Russia. On several occasions throughout its history, Russia has been at the brink of a fall or threatened with a forceful overthrow. Not only did the country withstand those difficult times, it reemerged much

stronger. According to the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (hereinafter Foreign Policy Concept) (2008), the contemporary Russia finally rebounded from the post-Soviet slump and international humiliation, and has "real potential to occupy a worthy place in the world."

The debate about the status of Russia in international relations has never been settled. If anything, discussions about Russia's global role have only intensified. The interest in these questions has been fueled by the continuing nuclear standoff between the United States and Russia, and growing concerns about their plans to develop more robust nuclear deterrents and modernize their nuclear arsenals (Trenin 2005).

The aim of this essay is to provide a meta-review analysis of the literature on Russia's security and nuclear policy. As the title of the essay suggests, its focus is on the policies of the new Russia, officially, the Russian Federation, which was founded following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Russia has been recognized as the continuing legal personality of the Soviet Union, and its Soviet legacy continues to influence its national identity and political decisions. It is not surprising that contemporary studies often make comparisons between Russia and its Soviet predecessor, the USSR. Following this trend, this essay will set certain aspects of Russia's security and nuclear policy in their historical context. However, most of the literature examined in this essay is of more recent origin. Those readers who are particularly interested in the older scholarship on the Soviet nuclear policy are recommended to consult Catudal (1989), Green (1987), and Odom (1998).

The essay begins by defining the concepts of Russia's foreign, security, military and nuclear policy and looking at their description in the Russiaan official security and military doctrines. The latter documents contain Russia's views on its place in the world and its strategies for dealing with security problems, as well as the role of nuclear weapons in the Russian security framework. This is followed by a third section reviewing several explanations of Russia's nuclear posture, including the impact of identity and culture, leadership flaws, deficiencies of the decision-making framework, and other international and domestic factors on Russia's security and nuclear policy. Given the growing interest in arms control and nonproliferation, the fourth section examines analytical assessments of various issues concerning the security and safety of Russia's nuclear complex. The essay concludes with a brief overview

of the key findings, points of agreement and dissent in the literature on Russia's security and nuclear posture, and suggestions for future research.

<ha>Defining Security, Military, Foreign, and Nuclear Policy

<p>Before surveying the literature on Russian security and nuclear policies more closely, it is important to define these terms and clarify their relationship to the related concepts of foreign policy and military doctrine. The same ideas and ideologies underlie the state's security, foreign, and military frameworks. The same institutions and people are typically responsible for drafting and implementing them. In the pertinent scholarship, these policies have been defined rather loosely and security analysts have occasionally conflated these terms.

National security policy encompasses all actions concerning a state's internal and external security. Its goals are to safeguard state sovereignty, territorial integrity, stability, and economic prosperity by economic, political, military, and other available means (De Haas 2004:2). Foreign policy is much broader than security policy. It spells out a wide range of objectives that the state can pursue in the international arena and outlines strategies to guide its actions toward other states, international organizations, and non-state actors (De Haas 2003). Military policy, on the other hand, is narrower than security policy. It focuses on external threats to the state and summarizes strategies for their prevention, deterrence, and suppression. Nuclear policy is often part of the state's security and military policy. It defines the role of nuclear weapons in national security and circumstances under which they can be employed. It can also contain an official position on the issue of nuclear proliferation and a description of measures for securing fissile materials and the state's nuclear arsenal.

The goals and principles of national policies as well as the means for their realization are often described in official documents known as doctrines or concepts. National security doctrine, for example, provides an assessment of internal and external threats and specifies strategies for their counteraction. Foreign-policy concepts review the state's broad objectives in international relations, while military doctrine defines external threats and strategies of national defense (Godzimirski 2000:73). It is evident that these policies and concepts are closely interrelated and they all define certain elements of the state's national security framework. In the Russian context, the National Security Concept is the basic document that conveys Russia's views on the security situation and formulates its security policy. The role of nuclear weapons is described in this document, as well as in the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (hereinafter Military

Doctrine) (2010). The Foreign Policy Concept (2008) is another doctrinal paper that provides details on some elements of the Russian security framework.

The National Security Strategy up to 2020 that is currently in force in Russia was signed by the Russian President Dmitri Medvedev on May 13, 2009 (hereinafter, Strategy 2020; see Schröeder 2009; Dimitrakopoulou and Liaropoulos 2010). This new and long overdue document replaced the earlier National Security Concept adopted in 1997 and updated in 2000 by then acting President Vladimir Putin. Strategy 2020 was preceded by the endorsement of the new Foreign Policy Concept in July 2008 and followed by the new Military Doctrine published in February 2010, which replaced an earlier document adopted in 2000. Along with the enactment of the new Military Doctrine, President Medvedev also approved the Foundations of State Policy in the Area of Nuclear Deterrence until 2020. The contents of the last doctrine remain classified. The listed documents as well as the concepts and doctrines that preceded them have received a substantial amount of attention from scholars as a subject of study capable of providing insights into Russian security and nuclear policies and the evolution of Russia's strategic mind.

<ha>Exploring Russia's Security and Nuclear Posture

<p>There has been an ongoing discussion of Russia's role in the post–Cold War international security framework. The country's recent economic revival and combative foreign policy has only fueled this debate. One side of this controversy is about defining Russia's strategic resurgence. Most analysts agree that Russia has relinquished its superpower standing. Yet, there has been no consensus on how its new international position should be described. Another dimension of the debate is about the nature of Russia's security thinking and whether it constitutes an extension of or radically departs from the security policies and nuclear strategy from the Soviet past. This section provides an overview of the Russian security policy and nuclear posture as construed by scholars from their analyses of the Russian security and military doctrines and assessments of Russia's nuclear arsenal.

<hb>Russia in a New Geostrategic Environment

<p>After the demise of the Soviet Union, contentions about Russia's superpower status disappeared not only from the Western rhetoric but also from the Russian discourse. The Russian government, however, has never relinquished its claims to a "great-power" status for Russia. Already in 1992, on the backdrop of spiraling economic and political crises, President Yeltsin declared that Russia was "a great power by virtue of its history, of its place in the world, and of

its material and spiritual potential" (Erickson 2001:12). These declarations have quickly reentered the Russian official and popular discourse. Russia as a "great power" has been one of the themes that runs through the Russian security, foreign policy, and military concepts. The goals of Russia's policies as defined in the documents mentioned above are to protect and strengthen the Russian position in the world. The 1997 National Security Concept, for example, called for the "consolidation of Russia's position as a great power and as one of the influential centers of the emergent multi-polar world," and the 2000 version writes about upholding the country's "sovereignty and strengthening its position as a great power" (Godzimirski 2000:82). The Foreign Policy Concept (2008) is premised on the same ideas. The document declares that Russia has fully rebounded after the hardships of transition. It states that the country has entered a new epoch of Russia's "substantial influence upon the development of a new architecture of international relations."

Strategy 2020 is the most optimistic policy statement. Its level of confidence about Russia's resurgence surpasses all of the preceding documents. Strategy 2020 is also devoid of heavy sentiments of conspiracy and encirclements by unfriendly nations, and does not directly mention the United States as a security threat. This change in the Russian attitude is noteworthy because the practical measures of cooperation with the United States that spiked following 9/11 have decreased since then. The chill in the relations between the United States and Russia was caused by the second wave of NATO's expansion, the plans of the Bush administration to build a new system for missile defense, American alleged support for color revolutions in several post-Soviet nations, as well as the Russian war with Georgia in August 2008. Even the Russian Military Doctrine (2010) refers to NATO and the United States as "dangers," but not "threats." This distinction in the Russian doctrinal lexicon is very important. A "danger" is defined as a situation that can potentially escalate into an immediate military threat, but is not, yet, a threat. Thus, the Military Doctrine (2010) lists NATO as a military danger to Russia and implies that attempts of some states to set up military bases in the territories adjacent to Russia or establish missile defense systems in violation of international agreements also constitute military danger.

What follows from the survey of the Russian doctrines is that the country's thinking about its strategic setting has changed over time based on its international and domestic experiences, frustration with the level of multilateral cooperation, and growing tensions with the United States and NATO. According to official documents, Russia finds itself in a dynamic and

unstable international environment confronting complex challenges and threats. Like the earlier concepts, the current doctrines rule out the traditional threat of full-scale warfare with the United States or another state (Bluth 1998:68; Mathers 2000:159). Unlike the previous documents, however, the definition of security used in the National Security Concept (2000) has been broadened.

A "layered-cake" metaphor was once suggested for illustrating Russia's national security threats (Trenin 2005). According to this metaphor, unconventional security threats, such as the rise of international terrorism, are represented by the cake's "icing." The two layers of the cake stand for two sets of traditional security threats, namely, security issues originating from Russia's turbulent neighborhood and security threats associated with the Cold War agenda of managing the power of the United States (Trenin 2005:10). This metaphor would not apply to the current conception of threats that emerges from the reading of Strategy 2020. The latter paper emphasizes both hard and soft security issues and stresses the need for economic development and international cooperation (Dimitrakopoulou and Liaropoulos 2010). Unlike the previous concepts, Strategy 2020 goes far beyond the narrow traditional understanding of security stressing internal and external threats and favoring a military-based approach. A quick glance over a few examples of the titles of the Strategy's sections – "Economic Growth," "Research, Technology and Education," "Healthcare," "Culture," and "Ecology" – suggests that Russia has adopted a more comprehensive understanding of national security, which is now linked to questions of sustainable development and human security.

<hb>Russia's Security Strategies and the Role of Nuclear Weapons in Its Security Framework

<p>Russia's security strategies and views on the role of nuclear weapons in the country's defense followed the changes in Russia's strategic thinking about its place in the world and the ways of protecting its national security. The first military doctrine of Russia adopted in 1993 declared that the end of the Cold War brought with it the end of the global ideological confrontation and substantial changes in Russia's relations with the United States. It was estimated that the likelihood of global war was quite low, in contrast to during the Cold War era, and acknowledged that Russia had undergone substantial reductions in its conventional and nuclear forces. At the same time, the 1993 doctrine renounced the Soviet-era "no-first-use" (NFU) pledge and reserved Russia's right to a "first-use" nuclear attack in response to aggression against the country or its allies (Sokov 1997; Trenin 2005:14). This extension of the role of

nuclear weapons in Russia's nuclear policy was interpreted as a major departure from the nuclear strategy of the USSR and attributed to the weaknesses of conventional forces experienced by the country during its transition. Indeed, the Soviet Union's conventional capabilities were sufficient for defeating any aggression without reliance on nuclear weapons' "first use." After the demise of the Soviet military, Russia became dependent on the "first-strike" policy for deterring aggression (Cimbala 2001a:85). Although Russia revoked the NFU principle from its doctrinal papers, its views on nuclear weapons were much less ambitious than in the Soviet era. Nuclear force was reserved exclusively for global warfare. References to winning the nuclear Armageddon or striking with a massive nuclear attack were expunged from the Russian lexicon (Miller 1995, 93; Sokov 2007, 208).

The expediency of nuclear weapons in the Russian security framework was reassessed in the late 1990s in the context of NATO's eastward enlargement and its military engagement in Kosovo in 1999. The Balkan war clearly demonstrated that Russia was not immune to an attack by the alliance's conventional forces even outside of the NATO'S collective security zone (Sokov 2007). At that time, Russia's focus was to deter the threat of the limited use of conventional force and Russia's leaders turned to nuclear arms for the fulfillment of this task. A new and expanded role for nuclear weapons in Russia's security framework was formalized in its security concept and military doctrine adopted in 2000. The latter documents assigned two critical, overlapping, but not necessarily complementary, functions to the Russian nuclear arsenal. The first function was to deter limited "regional" conflict as well as less likely global war. Another function was that of a war-fighting machine. The documents stipulated that Russia could use its nuclear weapons in different kinds of warfare, including limited war situations (Yost 2001).

Considering the "chill" in relations between the United States/NATO and Russia, there was a widespread expectation that its new military and security doctrines would bolster the role of nuclear weapons. Contrary to these expectations, the Strategy 2020 moves away from the exclusive reliance on a "hard power" approach and places considerable emphasis on security through stable development. Since security priorities now include raising citizens' living standards, coping with demographic crisis, improving health-care systems, and supporting the middle class, among other things, much more attention is given to ways of dealing with domestic problems than to the search for and counteraction of external enemies (Penkova 2009).

The Military Doctrine (2010) also reduces, to a certain extent, the role of nuclear weapons in Russia's security policy. After numerous revisions, the final version of this doctrine kept much of the language of its predecessor, assigning Russia's nuclear weapons the same two roles of deterrence and a tool of warfare. The new document also retains the principle of the "first-use." The most significant change in the Russian nuclear policy, as revealed in the language of the 2010 Military Doctrine, is a much tighter criterion for the deployment of nuclear weapons. Instead of the first use "in situations critical to the national security" stipulated by the 2000 Military Doctrine, the criterion is now "when the very existence of [Russia] is under threat" (Military Doctrine 2010).

<hb>Assessments of Russia's Actual Nuclear Posture

<p>A country's official documents are commonly used as primary sources for inferring its nuclear policy and intended nuclear posture. However, the actual nuclear posture inferred from an assessment of a country's nuclear arsenal can be different from the intended one. There has been an undying interest among the nuclear analysts and scholars in assessing the inventory of the Russian nuclear forces. During the Soviet era nearly every aspect of the Soviet Union's nuclear posture was classified. At the end of the Cold War, volumes of data on Russia's nuclear systems were declassified prompting an explosion of publications on Russia's nuclear posture (for an excellent overview of the Soviet and Russian strategic nuclear forces, see Podvig 2001).

Several analysts highlighted a puzzling discrepancy between the Russian intended and actual nuclear posture as well as between the official doctrines and modernization programs (Bluth 1998; Sokov 2000). The Russian security and military doctrines stipulate that the roles of nuclear weapons are deterrence of an attack by conventional forces and prevention of regional conflicts. These missions can best be performed by the long- and intermediate-range missiles with targeting flexibility and deployability in any type of conflict. The Russian modernization programs, however, do not concentrate on the objective of minimal deterrence. Instead, a bulk of resources is spent on the assets that are required for strategic deterrence against the United States (Bluth 1998; Sokov 2007:218).

As in the Soviet era, the structure of Russia's nuclear arsenal is heavily weighted toward the MIRVed land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) (Sokov 2000:3; Gottemoeller 2004:183). An MIRV, or a multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle, is a collection of several nuclear warheads carried on a single ICBM or a submarine-launched ballistic missile

(SLBM). When a missile is MIRVed, it can carry several warheads striking at multiple targets. A drawback of the MIRVed silo-based ICBMs is their high vulnerability to attacks by the enemy's nuclear forces since these weapon systems are immobile and can be easily detected by surveillance satellites (Sokov 2000:3). To mitigate this vulnerability, the Soviet government attempted a series of modernization programs. For different reasons, the efforts at increasing the number of mobile ICBMs were futile, whereas the intended SLBM posture was achieved with considerable delay (Sokov 2000:10).

Little has been done to modernize the Russian nuclear forces after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia's nuclear arsenal has shrunk due to the natural attrition of weapons systems and reductions mandated by international agreements. However, the shape of the Russian nuclear posture has largely remained the same. It is adapted for the function of strategic deterrence performed by the land-based ICBMs and SLBMs, the two strongest arms of the Russian nuclear force. The long-range and strategic aircraft systems of long-range aviation continue to be the weakest part in Russia's strategic triad.

<ha>Explaining Russia's Security and Nuclear Standing

<p>The studies of Russian nuclear policy have been concerned with the reasons for Russia's obsession with its nuclear standing and how the country's increasing dependence on nuclear weapons can be explained. The scholarship has put forth a range of responses to these and other related questions. One set of explanations highlights the importance of various ideational factors, including Russia's historic identity, self-image, and political culture, while other accounts portray Russia's nuclear mission as a rational choice. Some answers to Russia's security policy have been derived from the models of bureaucratic and interest groups' politics and analyses of the leadership's characteristics. Finally, there is a large set of explanations accounting for Russia's political choices as an outcome of the interaction of various factors and forces in Russia's international and domestic realms.

<hb>Nuclear Weapons in Russia's "Great-Power" Image and Strategic Culture

<p>There are very few issues in politics of the Russian Federation that generate overwhelming consensus. Russia's nuclear status is one of them. Russian politicians, scholars, military elite, servicepersons, general population, and even the Russian Orthodox Church tend to agree on the country's nuclear standing. The roots of these attitudes and, by extension, Russia's nuclear-policy decisions have been traced to its historic identity and "great power" self-image.

The Russian leadership has been indoctrinated with the idea of Russia as a great power. "Greatness" has been regarded as a preordained quality determined by Russia's geography, history and an idealized vision of Russia as a center of global and regional stability (Blank 2000:35; Solovyev 2008:288). The heavy preponderance of land-based nuclear weapons systems in the Soviet nuclear structure, for example, was attributed to the legacy of the Russian Empire and its status as a great land power in Eurasia (Gottemoeller 2004:183). At the height of its military power, the Soviet Union flaunted the largest armed force in the world. Nuclear weapons and the Soviet army were the centerpiece of the Soviet Union's superpower image.

The weakening and eventual collapse of the USSR impaired this outlook. The loss of the Soviet republics reduced Russia's territory and caused significant damage to its strategic position. Russia's military-industrial capabilities were deteriorating and its poor economic performance was a source of significant unease. Nuclear weapons have become a vestige of the great power status in Russia (Baev 1996:42). They have served an important symbolic function for the country and boosted its international prestige.

Recent years have seen renewed interest in the concept of strategic culture as an alternative analytical tool for examining different aspects of national and international security, including the issue of nuclear nonproliferation (Johnson at el. 2009). Russia's strategic culture has offered researchers several clues about Russian nuclear policy's roots (Ermarth 2009:85). It has been argued that Russia's strategic culture has always exhibited conflicting attitudes of defensiveness bordering on paranoia, and perceptions of foreign threat, on one hand, and offensiveness bordering on pugnacity, combativeness, and competitiveness, on the other. These elements of the Russian strategic culture became particularly prominent under Putin's Russia that showed growing assertiveness in the international realm, but they can also be found in the strategic culture of the Tsarist and Soviet Russia (Ermarth 2009).

The contradictory stances of Russian strategic culture have been affected by Russia's history, geography, and imperial tradition. The Russian state emerged and expanded in conditions of almost constant warfare. Russia's size and geography made it difficult to control and defend the gigantic state. The Russian leadership has always feared the openness and indefensibility of its longest land borders. Russia's vast territory has also made it extremely challenging to modernize an economically backward state. This economic backwardness combined with the lack of "natural" borders meant vulnerability in the military domain. The

perceived defenselessness of the Russian territory reinforced by the history of wars contributed to the development of a strong tradition of deterrence. Russia's military strategies have always aimed at preventing surprise attacks and deterring potential aggressors (Galeotti 1994:3). Nuclear weapons in Russia's security policy has served to ward off the military threat.

Russia's strategic culture has also embraced the ideas of international missions that go beyond Russia's national interests and domestic concerns. The Russian military has been perceived as a means for performing this role or as a protective base from which the messianic agenda could be accomplished by other means (Ermarth 2009:88). Under President Putin, for example, Russia's national interests in security, economic prosperity, and enhanced international standing were augmented by the assertion of Russia's international mission to contain the United States and to advance more secure multipolar international relations (Ermarth 2009:93).

One of the most difficult issues in the studies of strategic culture is to assess the importance of culture, geography, history, and tradition relative to other factors. The critics of the cultural and geopolitical explanations maintain that there is no messianic ideology driving Russia's moves in the global arena and it is inaccurate to confuse today's Russia with the USSR. There have been many pragmatic reasons for the Russian current nuclear posture, including its decision to maintain a strong nuclear arsenal. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and political chaos that followed the breakup inflicted severe damage on the Russian armed forces. The first war in Chechnya and fierce infighting in the military and defense establishments destroyed their fighting capability and soldiers' moral (Cimbala and Rainow 2007:42). It was obvious that the Russian army was in too woeful a condition to defend Russia's territory and interests. The nuclear weapons were needed to compensate for the weakness of Russia's conventional military defense (Yost 2001).

<hb>The Impact of Decision-Making Processes on Russia's Security and Nuclear Policies

<p>An approach to decision making that is premised on the idea that governmental decisions result from the confrontation of agencies with different political agendas and institutional resources for obtaining the favored outcome is known as the model of political-bureaucratic decision making. Some studies of Russia's security and nuclear policy have resorted to this model for explaining the challenges of developing a coherent nuclear posture in Russia (Sokov 2000:3). Other analyses have highlighted the impact of conflicting interests within the Russian

military and broader security circles on important decisions concerning Russia's nuclear strategy and weapons' arsenal (Larrabee and Karasik 1997; Bluth 1998; Barany 2007).

In view of the closed nature of the Soviet policy system and the highly sensitive nature of information about the command-and-control of the nuclear arsenal, the researchers of the Soviet nuclear policy faced serious challenges in developing a detailed picture of the participants and processes involved in the Soviet policy formulation and implementation. It is well known, however, that Soviet decision-making in the area of security was very centralized. The main decision-making power was lodged with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union run by its Politburo and Central Committee (Catudal 1989) with the military establishments being politically subordinate to the Communist Party (De Haas 2004:16). During the Brezhnev reign, both the military and security service received a more direct voice in the making of security and defense policy in the Soviet Union through participation of the chiefs of the Committee for State Security (the KGB) and Ministry of Defense in the meetings of Politburo. However, it was the latter that maintained clear dominance in the policy-making of the USSR.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union that landed Russia's decision-making over the country's security policy in a state of flux, the military received even more opportunities to pursue its interests and boost its influence over the Russian strategic framework. The involvement of the armed forces in a political standoff between Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet followed by the military debacle in Chechnya strained Russian civil-military relations as did the continuing socioeconomic hardships experienced by the armed forces. The Russian state was weak, thus providing multiple opportunities for the military intervention into Russia's domestic politics. However, the multiple divisions and conflicts of interests within the diverse military bodies hindered their conspiratorial activity as well as their ability to take over and control decision-making about security and nuclear policy in the new Russia (Taylor 2003:217).

Besides the military and security establishments, Russia's president, who is the head of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, is vested with extensive authority in the area of national security and nuclear policy. There is a broad agreement over the failure of the first Russian President Boris Yeltsin to exercise this authority effectively during his terms. Yeltsin's administration fell short of creating an effective decision-making system for developing and coordinating Russia's security, foreign, defense, and nuclear policies (Barany 2007). Important decisions on the matters of national security and foreign policy were made in a small circle of

Yeltsin's cronies without any parliamentary or public oversight (Larrabee and Karasik 1997). The lack of clear mandates of various state agencies in the realm of security policy contributed to fierce in-fighting between the Russian Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Policy, and other political forces.

Putin inherited the country when decision-making over its national policies was in a state of disarray. He was immediately thrust into a role of political arbiter between military, security, and other political bosses. The situation was complicated by the existence of multiple security and defense agencies with somewhat ambiguous and overlapping lines of authority appealing to the president. In Russia, the Ministry of Defense has legal authority and control over the armed forces, while operational-strategic command is lodged in the General Staff within the structure of the Ministry of Defense. The relationship between the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff has never been cordial. In 1998 a serious dispute erupted between the Defense Minister Marshal Igor Sergeyev, a former commander-in-chief of Russia's Strategic Rocket Forces, and General of the Army Anatoly Kvashnin, the Chief of the General Staff. The argument revolved over the place of nuclear strategic weapons and conventional forces in Russia's strategic posture (Blank 2000; Gottemoeller 2004:186). The National Security Concept of 1997 demoted the role of conventional forces, which surely did not conform to the General Staff's views (Blank 2000:7). Sergeyev's conception of threat as originating from major strategic competitors, such as the United States, led him to prioritize a robust strategic nuclear force. Kvashnin, who emphasized the threat of regional instability and small-scale warfare, promoted modernization of conventional forces.

Marshal Sergeyev, at first, was successful in persuading Yeltsin to reinforce the Russian nuclear force through the creation of a comprehensive strategic nuclear deterrence system. In 2000, General Kvashnin, officially a senior deputy to Marshal Sergeyev, endeavored to convince the new Russian President, Vladimir Putin, to enhance the status and power of the General Staff and military forces at the expense of the Ministry of Defense. Putin, who faced a fierce public battle between the military top brass, decided to transform the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces from being a service branch of the armed force to an arm of service, effectively downgrading them from being an independent force to a weapons system (Main 2003). Although, the decision to denuclearize Russia was highly contentious because it was a clear departure from the policy set out in the 2000 Military Doctrine, it was, however, consistent with the reduced threat

perception and rapprochement with the United States and NATO (Umbach 2003). The Bush administration's withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002 contributed to the reversal of this decision. It reinforced the conviction of denuclearization's opponents that Russia was weakening itself prematurely in the face of continued uncertainty about the future nuclear policy of the United States.

Besides the described rift within the military and defense circles, the Russian political scene has been replete with disagreements over a series of other issues concerning the proper sequence of military reform, the character and changes to defense structures, and appropriate defense expenditures, and so on. The most recent debate revolved around the contents of the new security concept and military doctrine. The drafting of the Strategy 2020 was in the hands of the Security Council, whose role in Russia's policy-making has waxed and waned depending on the political stature of its secretary (Schröder 2009:7). Other ministries, bureaucrats, organizations, and members of the academic community, all of whom had diverging priorities, also provided their input. The effort to consolidate and reconcile these different, at times, conflicting, interests were obvious. The drafting of the new Military Doctrine also generated considerable controversy within the Russian political and military elite over the role of nuclear and conventional forces in Russia's framework for national security.

It has been suggested that many of the clashes between Russia's military, security, and other political establishments are a manifestation of an ongoing argument between the two schools of thought. A school of "traditionalists" adheres to a worldview in which Russia's military plays the key function in supporting its status of great power in the world. The traditionalists reject any foreign-policy losses or deterioration of Russia's military power, including its strategic nuclear force. The "realist" school of thought favors the alignment of Russia's security framework with economic and political realities inside and outside Russia (Umbach 2003). The disorderly nature of Russian politics and the peculiarities of its institutional culture make effective deliberation and debate on the security issues between the adherents of these worldviews a big challenge. The Russian political setting has become conducive to messy wrangling over reform-related questions, which often take on a symbolic meaning exploited by both supporters and opponents of defense and security reforms (Gottemoeller 2004).

<hb>The Role of Leadership in Setting and Implementing the Russian Security and Nuclear Agenda

<p>A number of studies have noted how the personal qualities of Russia's political and military leaders as well as their leadership styles have influenced directions and outcomes of Russia's security and nuclear policies. It is widely acknowledged that the military is the most conservative state institution. The organizational structure and culture of military establishments are deeply averse to uncertainty and disarray. Consequently, the state military is rarely supportive of reforms associated with the lack of order. It takes a very strong leader, who is respectful of the military culture but capable of implementing the change, to bend the army's resistance and muster its political support (Herspring 2006). All Russian leaders, before Vladimir Putin, were either too weak to face this challenge, or indifferent to the military's concerns. As a result, they were confronted with the army's firm resistance and lack of institutional support.

Beginning with the policies of glasnost and perestroika adopted by the last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, the Russian military leadership developed a deep sense of apprehension and even hostility toward the idea of reform. Gorbachev's measures damaged the core of the military hierarchical structure and demolished the system, which the Soviet military had sworn to defend. The open discussion of budgetary cuts in the army was in grave violation of the highly secretive military culture. The public critique of the military actions in several Soviet republics dampened its reputation and lessened its prestige (Herspring 2006, 195). Yeltsin began with the courtship of military officials winning their initial support. However, his futile promises of economic assistance quickly became a source of disappointment as did his lingering efforts at implementing a comprehensive military reform. Under the Yeltsin leadership, the strained Russian army had seen a virtual free-fall. Its military preparedness, moral, and the living standards of the service persons declined to unseen levels (Herspring 2006:195). There has been a plethora of reports and studies that depict the years of neglect, financial constraints, and shocking conditions in the armed forces under the Yeltsin administration, as well as during the early years of Putin's term.

Although, some scholars commend Gorbachev's progressive ideas on the nuclear disarmament and East–West relations (Calingaert 1991), most of the analysts concur in their negative assessment of Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's role in implementing a comprehensive military reform. Opinions on Putin's contributions to Russia's security framework, however, differ. Herspring (2006), for example, argues that only Putin has made a genuine effort to come to grips with the Russian army's multi-faceted problems. Military reform and modernization of

the armed forces was at the top of the list of priorities for the Putin team (Facon 2005:203). The reason why these initiatives had achieved only modest success was the gravity of military problems. Others have pointed to Putin's affinity with the Russian military circles making him an unlikely candidate for enacting a major reform (Taylor 2000; Miller 2004:27). The fact that Putin's administration devoted much attention to the military problems, particularly toward the end of Putin's first term, was interpreted as a campaign tactic. Military reform was an important issue for voters in the pre-electoral context of the Duma elections in December 2003 and the presidential elections in the spring of 2004 (Facon 2005:203). The opponents of the latter position rejoin that calls for the military reform were more than an electoral ploy. It was an operational necessity that Putin implemented in order to forestall the complete collapse of the Russian armed forces.

<hb>Nuclear and Security Policy as an Outcome of the "Two-Level Games"

<p>There has been some debate about the extent to which Russia's policies are determined by its domestic politics (see, for example, Taylor 2003). Many studies have described the policies as the outcome of the "two-level games" (Sokov 2000:85). The latter represents a model of a decision-making process consisting of simultaneous negotiations at the intranational level, influenced by competing agendas and priorities of various institutions, and at the international level, with its structure of constraints and opportunities. The development of the Russian security and nuclear policy in the early 1990s, for example, was a "two-level game" that involved international negotiations over strategic arms reductions with the United States and domestic political maneuvering between powerful interests in Russia (Sokov 2000:85). Russia's national security doctrines have always stressed the importance of both the international and the domestic context and defined Russia's national interests as a reflection of both internal developments and changes in the international domain.

Not every study of the Russian security policy relies on the "two-level games" approach. The majority of scholars agree, however, that Russia's security and nuclear policies cannot be understood outside of the broader international setting, particularly without considering the goals and activities of the United States and NATO. Thectivities of these powerful actors have been the real detonator for conceptual changes in Russia's thinking about its nuclear posture (Yost 2001; Solovyev 2008:29). The nuclear provisions of the Russian National Security Concept published in 2000, for example, were shaped by the Russians' interpretations of NATO's air

raids in the Balkans. NATO's new strategic concept approved in 1999 contains a provision that allows the alliance to conduct its operations outside of its traditional territory bounded by the borders of NATO's members. Many analysts maintain that it was NATO's Kosovo operation and expanded territorial "jurisdiction" codified in the new strategic concept that compelled the Russian authorities to assign new roles to Russia's nuclear weapons (Blank 2000, 1). The performance record of the United States' conventional precision-guided munitions in the Balkans, and later in Afghanistan and Iraq, was in extreme contrast to the performance of Russia's conventional forces. The apparent military superiority of the United States combined with the growing potential of the Chinese military challenge heightened Russia's need for a strong nuclear arsenal (Weitz 2007:5).

During the first presidential term of Putin, the United States' plans to build a strategic missile defense system in Europe against the "rogue" states became a major Russian concern. The withdrawal of the United States from the antiballistic missile (ABM) treaty provided the Russian government with a political pretext for rescinding the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-2), which placed a ban on the use of MIRVs on ICBMs. With the abolishment of START-2 in 2002, Russia no longer felt constrained in determining the structure of its nuclear posture. Thus, any move by the United States perceived by the Russian government as a threat was responded to with policies and actions aimed at strengthening Russia's deterrence capability (Trenin 2005).

Not much research has been done on the impact of the policies of the Obama administration on Russia at the time of writing this essay. Some commentators have already assumed that the change in the leadership in both countries and an indication that the United States will seeks a fresh start in its relations with Russia might affect the language of Strategy 2020 and the new Military Doctrine endorsed in 2010. Russian politicians and military leaders have been attentively watching the United States' developments, particularly, the proposed changes to the missile defense system, negotiations over a new treaty to replace START-2, and the United States quest for the multilateral support of its sanctions against Iran. The Russian leadership will be reluctant to follow the policy of denuclearization if the United States gradually elevates the role of nuclear weapons and strategic defense systems in its security framework.

Another international issue that has recently attracted increasing attention of both political leaders and analysts concerns the nuclear aspirations of Iran and the nuclear triangle of

Iran, the United States, and Russia. Russia has traditionally objected to using force and sanctions for resolving issues with nuclear proliferation favoring, instead, economic tools and diplomatic craft. Iran is Russia's close neighbor and these two states cooperate in a variety of fields. Russia has been assisting the Iranian government in the development of nuclear power through the construction of the Bushehr nuclear plant. It has also been a major supplier of certain types of weapons to Iran. Some analysts claim that these strategic interests account for Russia's resistance to "hard sanctions" against Iran and its stream of vetoes on resolutions in the UN Security Council allowing for the use of force against Iran. Others maintain that the Russian leadership exploits the Iranian quagmire in order to foil the spread of American influence in the Middle East (Harvey and Sabatini 2010). It is not, however, in Russia's interests to see the emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran. The future analyses may speculate about the discrepancy between Russia's overall aggressive nuclear posture and reluctance to rely on forceful means for disciplining states aspiring to join the nuclear club. A broader question of interest concerns the utility of the use of sanctions or military force for the success of nonproliferation efforts.

<ha>Debates about Nuclear Proliferation, Russia's Command and Control System, and Safety of Nuclear Arsenal

<p>Besides considerable interest in the official policies of Russia and their interpretations, there have been lively academic debates about the desirability of nuclear proliferation as well as the safety of the Russian nuclear weapons system. Weaknesses of the global nonproliferation regime and efforts of several states and non-state actors to acquire nuclear capabilities have made the spread of nuclear weapons a major international concern. According to some political analysts, known as proliferation optimists, the spread of nuclear weapons is more to be welcomed than feared. By increasing considerably the potential costs of nuclear war, nuclear weapons also reduce the likelihood of war (Cimbala and Rainow 2007, 95). In an anarchic international system without an overarching authority to forestall states' aggression against each other, the best way to protect a state from being attacked is through credible nuclear deterrence. On the opposite side of this debate are proliferation pessimists who decry the spread of nuclear weapons. For nuclear deterrence to be effective, a state with nuclear capabilities must have strong command and control of nuclear weapons to prevent their accidental, unauthorized, or inadvertent use (Busch 2002). Proliferation pessimists assert that the risk of the purposeful or inadvertent attack, or the

leakage of tactical weapons to non-state actors is too high and the nuclear gamble is never worth undertaking.

The debate over the consequences of nuclear proliferation has significant implications for Russia's nuclear and security policies and, as a consequence, for the future of nuclear weapons in the world (Busch 2002). If Russia clings to the view that nuclear proliferation is benign or unavoidable, then the danger of nuclear weapons' spread to other parts of the world might increase. The potential for unauthorized sales and illegal diversion of weapons to others cannot be reduced if Russia maintains or expands its vast but insufficiently secure nuclear weapons systems. Russia's position on nuclear proliferation issues will also have an effect on the evolution of its political and military relations with the United States (Cimbala and Rainow 2007:95).

The debate over nuclear proliferation was reignited in the 1990s and, again, in the 2000s with the publication of an influential book, *The Logic of Accidental Nuclear War* (1993), and a series of articles, by Bruce G. Blair, a former American ICBM launch control officer and one of the foremost experts on Russia's security and nuclear weapons. Blair concluded that rapid retaliation in response to a missile attack detected through the early-warning system, known as the "launch-on-warning" runs a high risk of accidental warfare due to the high possibility of mistakes and malfunctioning of the nuclear command and control system (Blair 1993; 1995:59). Bruce Blair was not alone in foreseeing the possibility of nuclear doomsday resulting from false warning. Several prominent scholars in this field have warned about the vulnerability of the nuclear command and control systems to various kinds of catastrophic errors (Cimbala and Rainow 2007:47).

The first Soviet nuclear command and control system relied on the principle of the physical separation of nuclear warheads from their delivery vehicles. Under this system, however, the survivability of the Soviet nuclear weapons and its command structure was in question. A fast and precise strike by an American missile could destroy the Soviet Union's ICBM arsenal and demolish its control and command, thus, essentially disabling the Soviet leadership and preventing it from carrying out a retaliatory attack. Because of these concerns, the Soviet government revamped its command and control structure and adopted the option of "launch on warning." To be able to carry out the rapid retaliatory attacks, the Soviets also built a

comprehensive and reliable early warning system, which included a long-range radar and early warning satellites (Busch 2002).

The break-up of the Soviet Union and the subsequent economic shock severely weakened the Russian command structures and communication networks, and damaged the country's early warning system. The "launch on warning," however, remains a core element of Russia's nuclear strategy. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, most of Russia's long-range radars happened to be outside of its territory and the country had a very limited number of functioning high-elliptical satellites (Busch 2002). Despite the Russian government's efforts to overhaul its early warning system, it is far from being comprehensive and does not cover Russia's entire territory. As of January 2009, Russia had only five operational satellites. Three of them are the first-generation satellite systems that can detect launches of missiles from the US territory, but cannot detect missiles launched from sea or other regions. The other two are newer satellites, which are supposed to provide global coverage but are not, yet, fully operational. Other parts of the Russian nuclear command and control system have been under unprecedented stress. The shortage of funds prevented modernization of archaic communications and computer equipment employed in the management and control of the nuclear arsenal. As a result, the risk of false signals detected and transmitted by the system has been increasing. This problem of errors in the early warning system is particularly acute because Russian defense strategists and political leaders already feel threatened (Cimbala 2001b; Cimbala and Rainow 2007:47).

The increased political coherence and centralization of power in Moscow has boosted the government's ability to maintain control over Russia's far-flung nuclear arsenal. Yet, problems remain in managing nuclear facilities located in Russia's distant regions (Moltz 2004, 1). A major contributing factor to the rise of the impact of regions on the Russian nuclear system has been a severe financial situation. Nuclear facilities in the regions have been affected much harder by the economic decline than nuclear sites in and around Moscow (Jasinski 2004, 80). Suffering from the perennial government's arrears in salaries and delays in handing out social benefits, food allowances, and other payments, the Russian military, including its strategic nuclear force, has been unable to pay for water, electricity, and gas supplied by the regional utility companies. This situation encouraged the military units to agree to various forms of assistance to the local and regional bosses, subsequently increasing the regional influence over the military and nuclear force (Jasinski 2004:80).

The Russian leadership undertook some steps for cushioning the adverse effects of the military rollback on both the nuclear hardware and the nuclear facilities' personnel. The US government initiated a series of threat reduction and nonproliferation programs, of which the Nunn-Lugar program remains "the best and most cost-effective" one. Emerging as an urgent response to secure and destroy the excess nuclear weapons of the collapsing Soviet Union, the program evolved into a broader effort at mitigating the threat of terrorist groups acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities (Turpen and Finlay 2009). The first Bush administration and, later, the Clinton cabinet launched several initiatives aimed at creating alternative non-military jobs for engineers, scientists, technicians, and other personnel employed in the nuclear complex (Weiner 2002). In accordance with US/Russia bilateral agreements, Russia has destroyed many nuclear weapons and removed other systems from operational deployment (Weitz 2007).

Notwithstanding these efforts, the pace of eliminating Russia's excessive nuclear arsenal, securing nuclear sites, and providing civilian opportunities for former nuclear workers has been very slow (Turpen and Finlay 2009). Successful crisis management requires transparency of communications, political reliability, and accurate perceptions of the adversaries' intentions and capabilities. None of these requirements have been met by the Russian command, control, and communications system (Cimbala 2001b:122; Cimbala and Rainow 2007:47). Opportunities for security breaches, theft, and system compromises still exist in the Russian nuclear complex, thus significantly increasing the risk of accidental, unauthorized, and inadvertent use of nuclear weapons. Today, more than ever, there is an urgent need to rethink and renegotiate more comprehensive strategic arms control agreements between Russia, United States, and other nuclear states.

<ha>Conclusion

<p>The aim of this essay was to review the literature on Russia's security and nuclear policy focusing on those debates that seek to define, assess, and explain a new Russia's security and nuclear posture. What follows from this meta-review analysis is that the contemporary security and nuclear policy of the Russian Federation inherited a rich tapestry of Soviet thinking. That thinking, in turn, was influenced by historical experiences of wars and invasions as well as the long-lasting standoff with the United States. Today, as before, Russia continues to place a high premium on the avoidance of a surprise attack and relies on its nuclear capabilities for the

primary function of deterrence (Cimbala and Rainow 2007:1). Nuclear weapons in Russia have been assigned to a wider range of missions than they were in the USSR. Their role is not only strategic deterrence of the large-scale conflict but also prevention of a "limited" regional conflict and nuclear or conventional attack. The Russian leadership has been deeply aware of the ineptitude of the Russian military to counter an attack by a superior force from the United States or NATO. Therefore, the nuclear option remains an attractive alternative to Russia's enfeebled conventional defense (Sokov 2000:1).

Russia is not only a successor to the Soviet Union thinking but also the heir to its nuclear arsenal, albeit in a significantly reduced and dilapidated state. Russia retained control over three-quarters of the Soviet ICBM force and all of its submarine missiles. However, it suffered significant losses in the air leg of the strategic triad, namely, the air force bomber fleet (Zaloga 2002:215). The Russian nuclear capabilities have been undermined by the loss of important production and testing facilities and the weakening of the command-and-control and early warning systems. Efforts to modernize Russian nuclear weapons have been hampered by political turbulence, economic distress, technical challenges, and institutional inertia of the military-industrial complex.

The modern Russia, however, is not simply the USSR writ small, or a military shadow of the Soviet Union. In the early twenty-first century, the country finds itself in a very different geostrategic position. The contemporary Russian Federation appears to be more confident in its capabilities. The pessimistic view about the world and Russia's place in it has been replaced with a more pragmatic outlook. Russia has been portrayed as capable of tackling its domestic challenges and projecting its influence abroad. Importantly, both the Russian public and political elite perceive Russia as a great power nation. Russia's real and perceived strengths – its geographical size, population, revenues from natural resources, and nuclear arsenal – have bolstered these beliefs.

The topic of security policy and nuclear posture of the Russian Federation continues to offer numerous opportunities for future research, particularly at the time of important changes in Russia's perceptions of its place in the global system accompanied by a shift toward a multi-polar world. It is important to question what the factors are in Russia's international and domestic setting that influence its conception of threats to national security; How this assessment plays out in Russia's decisions about the deployment of Russian troops; What the future

directions of Russia's nuclear modernization policy are and who will influence decisions about the modernization of weapon systems; What the obstacles are to Russia/US cooperation on the nuclear issues, and what the implications are of the deployment of the global missile defense system by the United States for American-Russian relations, arms control, and nuclear proliferation.

Although, this essay has looked at a number of debates about Russia's security policy and its nuclear posture, some discussions have been omitted due to limitations of space. The scholarship, for example, has raised a question about whether Russia's increased reliance on nuclear weapons is an exclusively Russian phenomenon or a manifestation of a broader trend that can be evidenced in the United States, France, and other nuclear states (Sokov 2007). Another debate concerns Russia's motivation for lowering the nuclear use threshold. The reviewed literature has attributed Russia's position on the use of nuclear weapons in regional and local wars to weaknesses in Russia's conventional forces. In contrast, a number of analysts contend that the real motive for Russia's expanded nuclear posture is to increase its political clout with NATO and the United States (Schneider 2008). A future analysis examining the interplay of Russia's motivations in the area of nuclear policy will make important contributions to this debate. Furthermore, some researchers have pointed out that Russia's nuclear posture is no longer premised on the strategic relationship with the United States. A tripolar nuclear framework that includes United States/NATO, Russia, and China will supersede the former bipolar one (Trenin 2005).

Predicting Russia's actions in the areas of its security and nuclear policies is a difficult venture. The nature and outcome of Russia's domestic and foreign policies are often determined by a mixture of internal and external circumstances, leaders' personalities, and intra-agency feuding. There are ample avenues for examining the presence of powerful interests in Russia's political arena and how shifts in the power balances and changes in bargaining strategies influence its decisions in the area of security and nuclear policy. It has been argued that today, as in the past, Russia is governed by the post-Soviet security and military elites with deep-seated imperial attitudes and realist outlook on the world (Cohen 2007). There is a lively debate as to whether the current administration will be able to implement a sensible and effective security policy, or its increasingly assertive and bold foreign-policy actions will undermine Russia's recently regained might.

There are also pending questions concerning the safety of Russia's nuclear sites. A number of analysts have tried to assess the risks of "nuclear leakage" and pointed to continued vulnerabilities of the storage facilities and the lack of central control, accountability, and monitoring of the nuclear arsenal. The results of these studies are still inconclusive. Various programs aimed at improving the security of Russia's nuclear weapons systems are still in progress and require continued assessment of their effectiveness in preventing the smuggling of nuclear materials or transmitting of sensitive nuclear information.

The safety of "peaceful" nuclear facilities and risks associated with environmental degradation caused by nuclear operations is one of the topics that have been overlooked by the students of Russia's security and nuclear policy. The Soviet Union's nuclear accomplishments were not limited to its nuclear weapons arsenal. There were dozens of nuclear reactors and "peaceful" nuclear sites passed on to Russia. These "peaceful" nuclear facilities, technologies, and operations have, without doubt, influenced Russia's people, environment, and national security. Connected to the "peaceful" atom and broader security issues is the regional dimension of Russia's nuclear policy that, until recently, has not received sufficient attention (Moltz 2004, 7). Further research is needed to examine regional influence on Russia's nuclear posture and assess the consequences of the rise of regions for the safety of nuclear sites and in terms of the impact on outcomes of the Russian nuclear policy.

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<hx>Online Resources

<res> Bruce G. Blair's Nuclear Column. At www.cdi.org/program/issue/index.cfm?ProgramID=32&issueid=110, accessed May 20, 2011. Bruce G. Blair is an expert on nuclear forces and command-control systems. He is the President of the World Security Institute, which runs the Center for Defense Information (CDI) providing expert analysis of the myriad components of international security. CDI's Nuclear Column contributes wide-ranging analyses, discussions, and views on Russia's nuclear policy and nuclear weapons.

Strategic Arms Reductions: Problems, Events, Analysis. At www.armscontrol.ru/start/default.htm, accessed May 20, 2011. The STAR Site maintained by the Center for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies at MIPT (Russia) provides timely and comprehensive coverage of Russia's nuclear policy and various topics of nuclear proliferation. It contains official documents, research papers, and views of both American and Russian analysts.

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